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PRESS RELEASE

New British Aerospace deal with Indonesia strongly condemned

Campaign Against Arms Trade and TAPOL, the Indonesia Human Rights Campaign, have written to Prime Minister John Major to protest against the agreement announced today between British Aerospace and the Indonesian state aerospace company, IPTN, for the co-production of Hawk jet trainer and light attack fighter aircraft.

The deal was announced during a visit to London by Indonesia's Minister for Research and Technology, Dr B.J. Habibie, who is also President Director of IPTN and head of all the other Indonesian state companies manufacturing armaments and naval vessels. Dr. Habibie was received by John Major at Downing Street and held meetings with Government ministers, including Alan Clarke, Minister for Defence Procurement. It is the latest in a long series of contracts between IPTN and British Aerospace involving the export of Hawk aircraft, Rapier missiles, the transfer of technology and the construction of a technology college for members of the Indonesian armed forces.

CAAT and TAPOL protested to John Major that this deal would promote the IPTN as the base for the manufacture of military aircraft for use not only in Indonesia but throughout Southeast Asia and the South Pacific.

> "At a time when there is growing pressure worldwide to cut back arms production and exports and to reduce expenditure on military equipment, a principle which your own Government says it ascribes to, such a deal is totally unacceptable."
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> "Moreover, as your Government is well aware, Indonesia is engaged in a war of aggression in East Timor in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions 384 and 389 which were supported by Britain. The Indonesian armed forces are also at this very moment perpetrating large-scale atrocities against the people of Aceh in North Sumatra. There can be no justification for the British Government to reinforce Indonesia's fighting capability when it is behaving in such an aggressive and repressive fashion."

The two organisations called upon the Government to re-consider any decision already taken and not to allow this agreement to go ahead.

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